

# Many Happy Memories Mark Anniversary of Mrs. Owen

On a day as beautiful as the life whose anniversary it marked, Mrs. Anna Foote Owen celebrated her ninety-sixth birthday, Saturday, at her lovely home on W. Forest Ave. A few of her closest friends spent a pleasant hour with her in the afternoon, talking over old days and admiring the many beautiful gifts, and bouquets of flowers and greeting cards that Mrs. Owen had received. The highlight of the day was the receipt of a huge basket of dozens of white gladioli, the gift of Lieut. Robert Dickerson, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. Dickerson, from England. Lt. Dickerson gave his order to the London branch of the Chase National Bank, which cabled it to New York, and it was sent to the Norton greenhouse by the bank, which enclosed a note expressing its pleasure at having part in the gift. There was a decorated birthday cake, with candles which Mrs. Owen blew out according to tradition. Later ice cream and the cake were served by Mrs. Hiscock and Miss Matilda Holmes. Although unable to get about much, Mrs. Owen is in good health and mentally as keen as ever. She keeps up her reading and current events and enjoys calls from her friends.

It is well to record for the present generation the part Mrs. Owen played in the life of the city for many years, when life in Ypsilanti was truly worth living, and its many clever and cultured people were like a happy family.

Born in Lockport, N. Y., Mrs. Owen as a child came with her parents to Ypsilanti when her father, Prof. E. M. Foote, became professor of music in the newly established State Normal School. In later years he developed skill in music in the city schools besides teaching private classes, and in between these years spread the love of good music through several states by holding winter singing schools which closed with a cantata, "Esther, the Beautiful Queen," one, in which Mrs. Owen took solo parts. Her glorious and well-trained voice drew attention of Chicago musicians when Prof. Foote was director of the Chicago First Baptist Church choir and arrangements were made for her to accompany musical friends to Europe to study for grand opera. But just then she met the fascinating Tubal Cain Owen, grandson of the already fabulous Capt. Eber Ward of Detroit, and the opera career was forgotten.

The wedding, by decree of Mr. Owen's aunt, Emily Ward, a remarkable woman known and loved throughout the Detroit area as "Aunt Emily," whose word was law to the Ward tribe, took place in Aunt Emily's splendid home in Marine City and was described in ecstatic columns in Detroit papers as the most magnificent ever given in all that area. The bridal gown of lavender satin with collar and cuffs of pointe lace was set off by the pearl pin and ear-rings given by her parents. Among the eight members of the wedding party were Mr. Owen's charming sister and her future husband, later Congressman Justin R. Whiting. As a climax the passenger steamer Antelope, one of the great Ward fleet, on which Mr. Owen was an officer, took the whole wedding party, including the bride's family, on a round trip to Chicago. Dancing on board was accompanied by a cabinet organ installed for the trip by the groom.

On their return to Ypsilanti, where Mr. Owen became proprietor of the Eagle mills, they lived first with the Footes, where their two sons were born, later in what is

now the Austin George house and then in the Edmunds large rambling house, the home of the Normal Principal Welch, which is now the site of the Roosevelt School, where they lived for many years and which was the scene of many notable functions. One was a lawn social for St. Luke's Church, an example of the Ward lavishness. There were hundreds of Chinese lanterns strung about the grounds, a locomotive headlight borrowed from the Michigan Central, and torches about the bandstand which Mr. Owen had borrowed from the city west park from which the band played for dancing in a pavilion specially erected, as was the tent where colored minstrels, all local talent, put on a show, while in the mineral well office the inimitable Will McAndrew put on a convulsing "Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks." Fortune tellers and bonbon venders were many, and all the town attended, much money being added to the church coffers. At another indoor social for St. Luke's, the original Hing Lee, an attendant at that church, dressed in gorgeous silken native Chinese costume, played the Chinese guitar. Many musicales, especially as Miss Abba Owen began teaching the violin, were also held there.

Mrs. Owen's endearing personality, remarkable executive ability and interest in music and the dramatic art found many expressions. An ardent member of the board of the then struggling Ladies' Library Association, she directed many entertainments for its benefit. "The Deestrick Skule," in which 200 prominent citizens took part and Charles E. St. John, later a world famous astronomer, was the "skule-master," packed the opera house for two nights. Other shows, "A Trip Around the World," and "Fate," and a notable masked concert, where all performers wore masks until the last chorus, were notable. Mrs. Owen also had charge of the Normal alumni banquets put on by the Library Board for years. She was also on the committee that utilized a gift of Frank A. Todd to adapt the home of Mrs. Mary A. Starkweather who gave it, for library purposes.

The Owen family moved to Chicago for two months of the World's Fair in 1893 and on return Mrs. Owen staged a successful "Midway" in Prospect Park. For the relief fund for sufferers from the Johnstown flood, in which the two lovely Richards sisters perished, Mrs. Owen put on the comedy, "Married Life" with clever young Ypsilantians as cast, in her own home, Mr. Owen having a stage and scenery specially established for the performance, which was such a hit that two more performances packed the opera house and one was given in Belleville, making over \$200 for the fund.

Mrs. Owen was one of the early group of Ypsilanti chapter, D.A.R., of which her daughter Abba was a charter member. She served long on its executive board and was its musical director, besides accompanist for the opening song, "America," at each meeting. A chair in the Memorial Hall at Washington is named for her as a gift from the local chapter. She and her gracious mother, Mrs. E. M. Foote, were also for many years active in the Ypsilanti Home Association.

Her children, all of whom have preceded her to the better land, were also active in city affairs. Richard served as postmaster and Eber, trained in the law, preferred the home farmland and won prizes for poultry. Miss Abba gave freely of her talent, and no entertainment was complete without a violin solo from Miss Owen. Scores of Ypsilanti young people learned to love, and play the violin through her teaching and her annual recitals packed the auditoriums.

No mention of the Owen family should omit reference to the mineral well developed with its many products by Mr. Owen, and the sanitarium, all of which brought

## Calendar of Social Events

**TODAY**  
Past Noble Grands of Washtenaw of Mrs. Harold Sanderson.  
Ypsilanti Lodge number 548 I. O. O. F. Stein Circle of Dorcas Society of Lut Mrs. Andrew Smith.  
Order of Rainbow for Girls, ice cream Mrs. Luman Seamans, mother ad  
**TUESDAY**  
Phoenix Lodge number 13 F. and degree, 7:30, Masonic Temple Lo  
Loyal Order of Moose number 782, 8 o and visitors from Ann Arbor.  
Ypsilanti Business and Professional dinner meeting at home of Miss nell Rd., 6:30 p. m.

healing and a friendly feeling for Ypsilanti to people the country over.

When the Normal College bought the Owen residence and lands, the family moved to the Foote place, Mrs. Owen's girlhood home, but about two years ago she and her son Eber moved to the beautiful Albert Miller home two doors east, where she lives surrounded by beauty within and without, lovingly attended by her companion, Mrs. Hiscock, and happy in the calls of friends. The sunset years are passing for her serenely, brightened by her memories of her life of giving happiness to all who have come within her influence. To her Ypsilanti bids "Many happy returns of the day."

### Farewell Supper Given Rice Family

Mr. and Mrs. George W. Willoughby and Mr. and Mrs. George Helvey entertained at a farewell Sunday night supper honoring Mr. and Mrs. C. Alfred Rice and family, who are leaving for Coldwater, next week. Places were laid for 12.

Mr. Rice, who has taught at the Lincoln School for the past seven years, has accepted a position as teacher of mathematics in the Coldwater High School.

### SOLDIERS GUESTS AT GILBERT HOUSE

Groups of soldiers were entertained at Gilbert House Sunday afternoon and evening. An old fashioned picnic was prepared and served by the Junior hostesses on the lawn. Couples played ping pong, bunco, cards, croquet and badminton. They also enjoyed dancing later in the evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Elvidge and Miss Martha Buchanan were chaperones for the group.

#### Children Invited

All young children of the grades and junior high, interested in a marshmallow roast are invited to come to Gilbert House this evening at 7:30. They are to bring pennies for refreshments.

#### Meeting Tonight

This evening there will be a meeting of Carver Community Center Board and a work camp which is sponsoring a wood-cutting bee in the wood lot just west of Harriet St. School from 7:30 to 9 o'clock.

Edward Spencer and family, who have been living at the Sevey home on Brower St., have moved to 9 S. Normal St.

Little Shirley Springsted, Detroit, is spending a few weeks with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Springsted.

Mrs. Walter Pierce is leaving today for Chicago and Wednesday she will go with her niece and husband, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bodine to Black Duck Lake in Northern Minnesota for three weeks.

Roy Lockwood, Detroit, was the guest of his aunt, Mrs. George D. Lockwood, Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Will Cross and daughter Mary, Detroit, have been visiting Mrs. Edwin Conklin.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Marvin and Mrs. Jean Hayes entertained Mr. and Mrs. William Deuel, Detroit, Sunday, bringing them for a picnic

#### ATTENTION

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Saturday